

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information distribution system which distributes contents data via a communications network, the contents data being provided by an information source provider, comprising:

a distribution device for distributing distribution data containing the contents data; and

a receiving device for receiving and storing the distribution data,

wherein:

the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data, and

the receiving device rewrites the use limitation information of the stored distribution data upon receipt of permission by the distribution device.

2. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the receiving device receives from the distribution device a reuse information key indicative of details of changes made in the use limitation information and rewrites use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device based on the reuse information key.

3. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the use limitation information is reproducible count information of the distribution data.

4. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein the use limitation information is usable environment information of the distribution data.

5. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the receiving device is a PC which is connected to the Internet.

6. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

when the distribution device receives from the receiving device a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data, the distribution device judges whether or not the distribution device is authorized to give permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data.

7. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 6, wherein:

when rewriting of the use limitation information of distribution data cannot be permitted as a result of judgment by the distribution device, the distribution device sends information showing refusal of the request for rewriting the use limitation information of the distribution data with respect to the receiving device.

8. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 7, wherein:

when rewriting of the use limitation information of distribution data cannot be permitted as a result of judgment by the distribution device, the distribution device transfers the request for rewriting the use limitation information of the distribution data to a different distribution device.

9. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

when the distribution device receives from the receiving device a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data, the distribution device judges whether or not the receiving device has right to receive permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data.

10. The information distribution system set forth in Claim 1, wherein:

the use limitation information of the distribution data is contained in the distribution data by electronic watermarking.

11. An information distribution device, which is connected to a communications network and distributes distribution data containing contents data which is provided by an information source provider with respect to a receiving device, wherein:

the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data,

the device comprising:

a reuse request information receiving section for receiving from the receiving device a request for rewriting use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device; and

a reuse permission section for giving permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device.

12. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, wherein:

the reuse permission section sends a reuse

information key indicative of details of changes made in the use limitation information with respect to the receiving device, and

the receiving device rewrites the use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device based on the reuse information key.

13. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, wherein:

the use limitation information is reproducible count information of the distribution data.

14. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, wherein:

the use limitation information is usable environment information of the distribution data.

15. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, further comprising:

a reuse permission section which, when the reuse request information receiving section receives from the receiving device a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data, judges whether or not the distribution device is authorized to give permission to rewrite the limitation information of the distribution

data.

16. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, wherein:

when the reuse request information receiving section receives from the receiving device a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data, the reuse permission section judges whether the receiving device has right to receive permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data.

17. The information distribution device set forth in Claim 11, wherein:

the use limitation information of the distribution data is contained in the distribution data by electronic watermarking.

18. An information receiving device, which is connected to a communications network and receives from a distribution device distribution data containing contents data which is provided by an information source provider, wherein:

the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data,

the device comprising:

an order placing section for sending a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data which is stored in the information receiving device with respect to the distribution device; and

a reuse setting section for rewriting the use limitation information of the stored distribution data when obtaining permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data from the distribution device.

19. The information receiving device set forth in Claim 18, wherein:

the reuse setting section receives from the distribution device a reuse information key indicative of details of changes made in the use limitation information and rewrites the use limitation information of the distribution data based on the reuse information key.

20. The information receiving device set forth in Claim 18, wherein:

the use limitation information is reproducible count information of the distribution data.

21. The information receiving device set forth in Claim

the use limitation information is usable environment  
information of the distribution data.

23. The information receiving device set forth in Claim 18, wherein:

24. An information distribution method, which is connected to a communications network and distributes distribution data containing contents data from a distribution device to receiving devices, the contents data being provided by an information source provider,

the method comprising the steps of:

receiving from the receiving device a request for rewriting the use limitation information of distribution data which is stored in the receiving device; and



giving permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device.

25. An information distribution program, which is connected to a communications network and distributes distribution data containing contents data from a distribution device to receiving devices, the contents data being provided by an information source provider,

the program wherein:

the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data, and

the program using a computer to execute the processes of:

receiving from the receiving device a request for rewriting the use limitation information of distribution data which is stored in the receiving device; and

giving permission to rewrite the use limitation information of the distribution data stored in the receiving device.

26. A recording medium having the information distribution program of Claim 25 recorded therein.

27. An information receiving method, which is connected

to a communications network and receives distribution data containing contents data from a distribution device, the contents data being provided by an information source provider,

the method wherein the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data,

the method comprising the steps of:

sending a request for rewriting use limitation information of distribution data which is stored in the information receiving device with respect to the distribution device, and

rewriting the use limitation information of the stored distribution data when obtaining permission to do so from the distribution device.

28. An information receiving program, which is connected to a communications network and receives from a distribution device distribution data containing contents data provided by an information source provider,

the program wherein the distribution data further contains use limitation information of the distribution data,

the program using a computer to execute the processes of:

sending a request for rewriting the use limitation information of distribution data which is stored in the information receiving device with respect to the distribution device; and

rewriting the use limitation information of the stored distribution data when obtaining permission to do so from the distribution device.

29. A recording medium having the information receiving program of Claim 28 recorded therein.

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